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Letter dated 28 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform the Security Council that Rwanda feels offended by an ongoing campaign of misinformation against it. It is unfortunate for United Nations officials to echo the deliberate lies and misinformation by President Kabila and his allies who have been alleging that Rwanda and its allies violated the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. It has become a trend for Kabila and his allies to violate the ceasefire and get Rwanda or its allies blamed for that by the Security Council. As expressed in our previous correspondence, such quick distortion of the facts by Kabila, his allies and sympathizers are nothing but a deliberate effort to cover the heart of the problem which is their determination to solve the political problem of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by military means.

As you may recall, on 16 October 2000, Heads of State met in Maputo on the initiative of the South African President, H.E. President Mbeki, Ministers of Defence and Chiefs of Staff from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and South Africa were entrusted by the summit with the task of devising ways to disarm, demobilize and repatriate the Interahamwe and other armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In various meetings that ensued Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of the Congo never materialized — a fact that was made known to the Heads of State when they convened again in Maputo. Rwanda reiterated then — and does now — its commitment to withdraw its forces to 200 kilometres, a distance much further than the Kampala Disengagement Plan of 15 km. Indeed the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) pulled back in Kipushia, in Kasai Province, but only to have the Congolese Armed Forces (FAC) come fast from behind and kill more than 200 people.

In similar circumstances, as the RPA and Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) forces were preparing to honour the disengagement process in Katanga, Kabila forces together with Interahamwe militias and their allies launched attacks on our positions, namely, Musosa, Balanga, Pepa and Mtoto-Moja. This was the most arrogant violation of the Lusaka Agreement. The intention of Kabila was to "take the war to Rwanda". Unprepared for the attack, our forces had to retreat to the rear of Pepa from where we urged Kabila and his allies to respect the Lusaka Agreement and cease fighting. Misinterpreting our prudence for weakness, Kabila carried on the tempo of attack. Understandably, we had to defend ourselves and we did so as we stopped the attacks. This is the process that took our forces to Pweto, a point that

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was being used as a launch pad for FAC, Interahamwe, Front pour la défence de la démocratie (FDD) and the allies of Kabila. Clearly, therefore, the violaters of Lusaka are those who started the attacks in Pepa and not RPA, which merely stopped the attacks. The humanitarian crisis in Zambia that ensued as a result should be blamed on Kabila and his allied forces.

Rwanda maintains its pledge to honour Lusaka and still maintains its offer of disengaging 200 km. The Government even promises to withdraw from Pweto if the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) deploys there.

I wish to refer Your Excellency to my letter of 13 December 2000 (S/2000/1186) in which my Government asked the international body entrusted with the maintenance of security and peace in the world to assist Zambia and Rwanda, and indeed the region and the whole world, in disarming, demobilizing, repatriating to and reintegrating our nationals or handing over some of them found guilty to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. It is unfortunate that there has been no response and that some of these forces have found their way back to the front lines of the Congo. Since FAC, Interahamwe and their allies poured into Zambia, more than 2000 still armed Interahamwe militia and other Kabila forces crossed back into Congo and with their colleagues in the Democratic Republic of the Congo attacked our forces on 18 December 2000. Such attacks continue even today, coupled with air bombings on RPA positions in Pepa and Pweto by Kabila and his allied forces. If this is what the Security Council has been called upon to characterize as violations of the ceasefire by Rwanda and its allied forces, then it is wrong: "Our forces have no choice but to defend themselves whenever attacked."

We strongly urge the Security Council to assume its responsibilities and fully deploy MONUC without further delay, organize visits on the ground and supervise the withdrawal of troops as entrusted to it by the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and its various resolutions on the matter. Maybe for once the truth will be told about these violations of the ceasefire instead of relying on the same sole partisan sources.

I would appreciate it if this letter could be translated and circulated to all members for information as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Joseph W. **Mutaboba**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative